*Thanks from*
*Alberta's Environment*

# Introduction

*In January of 1990, the Government of Alberta presented its environmental vision to the public in a document entitled "Alberta's Environment Toward the 21st Century." The document explained the Government's commitment to achieve the protection, improvement and wise use of our environment, now and in the future, through ten environmental principles and thirty-seven policy statements. These principles and policies outline the scope of Alberta Environment's mandate in the protection and improvement of our air, land and water.*

*More than 25,000 vision documents were distributed throughout Alberta. To date, some 4,000 Albertans have responded by letter to Environment Minister Ralph Klein's invitation to "help shape our common future." Your comments and suggestions represent the environmental vision of concerned Albertans — parents, grandparents, children, farmers, business people, academics. Your letters ranged from half a page to eight pages long, and reflected everything from global environmental issues to local environmental concerns. All letters were reviewed and the contents were sorted into the ten areas addressed in the original vision document.*

*The Government of Alberta recognizes your commitment to our common future and appreciates your assistance. As a result, we have compiled this response document to summarize and to present a sampling of all your concerns and opinions on the management of our shared environment. Following a statement of each principle outlined in the vision document, your observations are summarized in an overview and highlighted by quotations from your letters.*

# Premier's Message

*It has been encouraging to see the number of Albertans who have responded to the challenge of helping to shape and direct the Government's environmental vision. I'm pleased that so many people have been willing to offer their suggestions, their critical comments and their support for our efforts. We in Alberta have been leaders in environmental protection and research, and your Government intends to continue this leadership. With your help we can and will keep Alberta beautiful and growing.*

*Sincerely yours,*

Don L. Getty

*Honourable Don Getty*

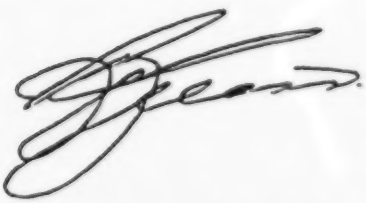
*Premier*

# Minister's Message

*Thank you to the thousands of Albertans who took the time to review the principles and policies in Alberta Environment's vision document and to respond with comments. Your questions, concerns, compliments, and suggestions have been carefully considered, and I assure you, they will be reflected in the new Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act.*

*I hope that you will not see your letters as the end of your involvement in this process, but rather as a beginning. Once the new act has been tabled in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta in draft form, I will be looking to Albertans once again to respond to the draft legislation during public consultation. It is heartening for the Premier, myself and all of our colleagues to know that so many of you are willing to be involved in Albertans' environmental future. I look forward to your further responses.*

*Sincerely yours,*



**Honourable Ralph P. Klein**

**Minister**

# Shared Responsibility

***All Albertans are responsible for ensuring the protection, improvement and wise use of our environment through their actions as individual citizens.***

## The Alberta Government:

1. demonstrates leadership and coordinates action in order to assist Albertans in fulfilling this responsibility.
2. recognizes that the final responsibility for safe and prudent use of contaminants and potential contaminants rests with the individual and corporate user.
3. shares responsibility with the public and local authorities to reduce risks associated with natural events such as flooding and drought.

## What You Said - Overview

Among those who responded, there was overwhelming recognition and support for government leadership in coordinating shared responsibility for the environment. The public recognizes that no one group can assume full responsibility for a safe environment; individuals, business, industry and government must all share the task. However, many people stressed that "in the final analysis the responsibility comes down to the individual." People can modify their lifestyles and make responsible consumer choices which inevitably will influence industry and business to produce and promote environmentally safe products, with wise disposal of wastes. People feel that the public needs to be "informed, educated, trained, encouraged and enlightened as to their responsibilities." Citizens are willing to help improve the quality of the environment, but "the government must take the lead." Many comments can be summed up in this statement: "I wish that we could do more to help."

## Your Comments

*Good stewardship of the environment is good citizenship.*

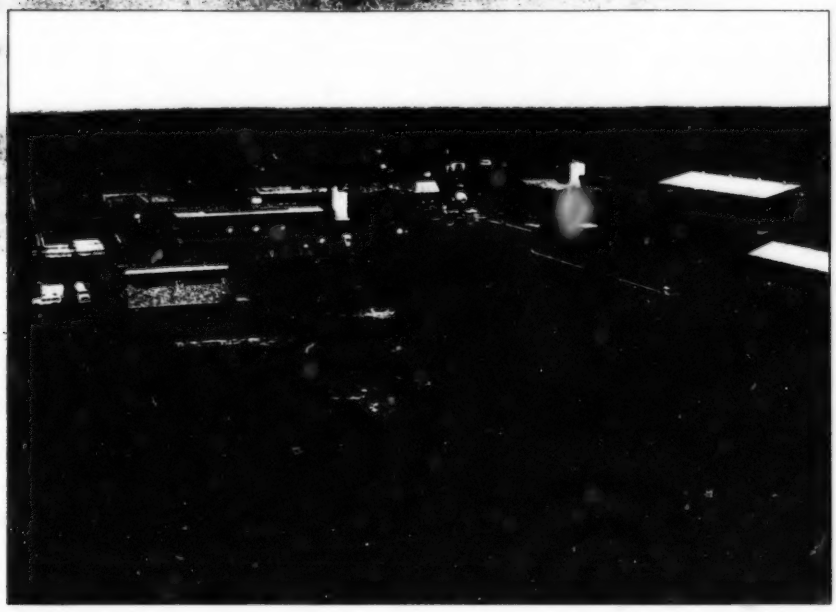
- Good stewardship of the environment is good citizenship.
- Shared responsibility – all our little actions add up to big ones.
- The last threat is ourselves. My parents grew up in the 1930s and were taught to reuse products. I have grown up in a disposable society, and because of this attitude, we have a serious problem. People are now recognizing that we play a role in the environment and how we act will determine the outcome.
- The solid backing of business, the people, and a knowledgeable, strong-willed government. I suggest this is the only safe political position for any government to take into the 90s and the 21st century.
- People need to be more accountable for their own consumption.
- Industrial pollution is consumer-driven . . . . [We] should accept the concomitant responsibility for the consequences of exercising that choice.
- I think that large business as well as the small individual should assume greater responsibility for the solution.
- The benefits . . . in Alberta from modifying our harsh environment to the degree we have demonstrated is practical.
- I think that there must be more cooperation between public and government. At present, there is an isolationist tendency in government which is self-defeating.
- The government must do more than assign final responsibility to individuals and corporations. Not only must these groups be educated environmentally, but government must be prepared to apply incentives and/or sanctions when necessary.
- You should say that final responsibility for unsafe and imprudent use belongs to your ministry. Such a policy would be the first step toward a more courageous defence of the environment.
- I dream of a much more enlightened and caring Alberta. We are stewards of this earth, not owners.

## Programs and Initiatives You Suggested

- Leave river valleys undeveloped for flood control, wildlife and recreation purposes.
- Your handling of the drought in southern Alberta is unnecessarily costly and complex. A look at less expensive options but equally efficient would be great because other areas are in need of more money.
- Funding for natural disasters should not be done through Alberta Environment.

- On floods, the Government needs to take more responsibility: get tougher on development of floodplains; bring in insurance that makes floodplain residents rather than taxpayers foot the bill for the aftermath of flooding. On drought, the Government needs to take less responsibility: protect water supplies for human use, stop pampering irrigators. Hurling public money at dams to make the prairies green (and farmers wealthy) is one of the Government's saddest, most dominant anti-environment biases.
- An additional amount or an annual premium should go into an environmental disaster fund.
- People need to be encouraged to acquire an attitude of "What can I do?" and of "How can I help?"
- Each citizen will make one goal per year to contribute to environmental protection.
- If the government wants the general public to be more environmentally responsible, they had better start setting a better example.
- Industrial plants must also be challenged to become more responsible in reducing pollutants.
- Business must not be allowed to operate without taking full responsibility for their effect on the environment.
- Encourage everyone to act as a custodian of our environment.

# Leadership



***Albertans will continue to show national leadership through leading edge research, technologies and environmental protection standards.***

## The Alberta Government:

1. uses research and leading edge technology in the development of conservation, pollution prevention and reclamation standards.
2. supports and directs, through the internationally-recognized Alberta Environmental Centre at Vegreville, environmental research undertaken by industries to make the most effective use of resources and information.
3. will continue to encourage provincial utilization of Canada's only special waste treatment facility at Swan Hills.

## What You Said - Overview

In the opinion of Albertans, our province should become a showcase of environmental protection: "Alberta could lead the world with environmental care." However, leadership in accomplishing such a goal is of concern to most of the respondents. Many letters stress that Alberta needs strongly committed leadership if we are to progress in caring for our environment. The government should provide "assertive leadership to address environmental issues" rather than be "the reluctant responder to public pressures" or "to disasters." Albertans strongly support the government's leadership in research, science and technology and many letters urge continuing such studies. Some favour building additional special waste treatment facilities like those at Swan Hills, particularly in the south, in order to reduce the risk of spills and decrease transportation costs. But people want existing industries to clean up their contaminants now, and look to the government to set scientifically-based, measurable and enforceable standards. Some want these standards to be the highest in the world.

## Your Comments

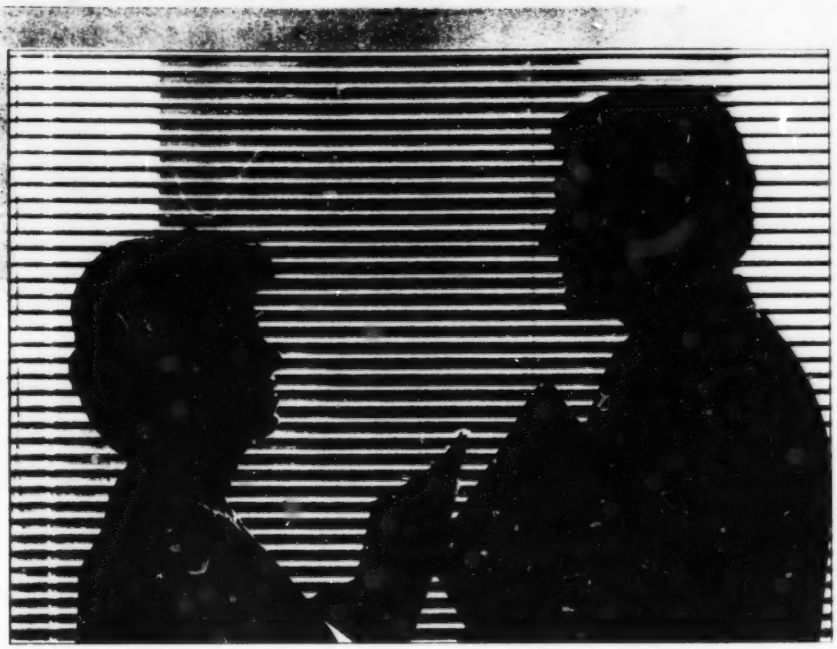
*The technology isn't there? Make it there!*

- If man can send people up to the moon, man can also get on top of this pollution problem, but governments have to lead the way.
- Let's be leaders in protecting this part of our fragile earth.
- The government's first obligation regarding the environment is public safety . . . . There seems to be a perennial problem over what is safe, but worldwide studies plus Alberta's efforts should lead to an appropriate norm.
- The technology isn't there? Make it there!
- Encourage establishment of alternative technology/conservation research centres and industries to replace polluting/aging industries.
- Develop sound, enforceable standards based on scientific information. Once established, enforce them. (Very poor past record.)
- Reclamation studies should be promoted.
- Stricter regulations for reforestation and reclamation of logged areas.
- We applaud your actions re: Swan Hills.
- The Swan Hills plant should be developed to meet the needs of Alberta and made attractive to the potential users (cheap).

## Programs and Initiatives You Suggested

- Why not develop the technology here for better environment management and sell it elsewhere instead of always buying it from somewhere else.
- Require existing manufacturers to implement research and development to replace hazardous chemicals with environmentally safe alternatives. The goal would be to ultimately eliminate these contaminants completely rather than just trying to find a safe method to dispose of them.
- Educated people are required in order to develop the technical understanding and leadership to minimize the waste that is currently occurring.
- Standards and regulations should be made known to all users. The work done at the Alberta Environmental Centre at Vegreville is not broad-based knowledge.
- Vigorously promote new and clean technologies even if they step on the toes of the "corporate giants," ie: fuel efficient cars, alternative cars, alternative fuels, recycled goods . . . .
- Develop a specific mandate to pursue environmental research, to develop technology and expertise which can be exported.
- That computers and photocopiers would be developed that would accept recycled paper.
- Development of solar power in place of energy obtained from combustion of hydrocarbons. N.B./There should be no nuclear power under any circumstances.

# Public Involvement



***Albertans will have every opportunity to understand and provide advice on decisions affecting our environment.***

## The Alberta Government:

1. encourages and facilitates public participation through information sharing, education, and consultation.
2. makes every effort to help Albertans understand that they are part of the environment and involves them in environmental protection and environmentally sustainable development.
3. will report regularly on the state of our environment as a primary means of sharing information.

## What You Said - Overview

The majority of the letters show strong support for public involvement in decisions affecting our environment. Participants welcomed the opportunity to be involved. Many people feel the key to successful involvement is "education – more than anything"; such education needs to be available at all levels of our society and for all age groups, beginning in childhood. "Both in schools and for the public at large, education is a must." Albertans realize that effective public involvement requires good communication between the government and the people of the province. They want not only to be heard and understood, but to have their ideas used in decision-making. Some respondents were skeptical about the government's commitment to public involvement; they question present intentions in light of their perceived lack of opportunity to respond or to be taken seriously in the past. Some feel that Alberta Environment is "out of touch with the general public," and that the Department does not follow the advice of scientists working in environment areas.

The people of Alberta are asking for a broad range of materials and strategies: information on current and past environmental studies; consumer information; product alternatives to harmful agents; reports on new technologies; reports on the work of environment and pollution emergency groups; reports on public hearings; reports on industry's use of toxic chemicals; public forums; workshops; interpretative programs; community campaigns; good, regular publications. As well, Albertans like the idea of regular broad-based reporting on the state of our environment. There is great appreciation of Environment Views as a useful educational tool. People are offering creative solutions to situations caused by a society which has been considered by many to be "consumer crazy and wasteful." With sound education, people feel they can contribute sound ideas to the public involvement process.

## Your Comments

*Education – more than anything . . . show/tell/teach the people . . .*

- Education – more than anything. We must be able to show/tell/teach the people (adults/children) of the province what should be done and what is being done instead of being reactionary and speaking only when attacked.
- Our Indians and Inuit can with our help and further education become efficient guardians of the north. They understand nature.
- I feel that the government is taking a positive step by asking for input from Albertans about environmental issues.
- The public has not been very involved in decision-making but very much should be. How serious are you about that? I can't help but feel cynical. Is this just more rhetoric?
- I cannot really trust Alberta Environment for several reasons: I mean, what it says in the poster is nice, but WHAT ABOUT The Oldman Dam, the northern forests? We are doing everything we can to get some long-term responsibility injected into the way we consider our environment but I continually feel that the decision-makers are not listening. If you are about to, many thanks.
- We feel that education in environmental issues is vital, both in schools and for the public at large, Coupled with this, encouragement should be given for the public to participate in all major environmental decisions.
- How to redirect our efforts – tools: information on natural resources; alternatives for waste management, water conservation, electricity; means for public input.
- It is important that the public input is utilized and more important that the public's perception is that their input is being used.
- My vision for Alberta is improved communication. The information dispersed by the Government of Alberta is good BUT hard to get at. Energy Matters, Alberta Special Waste Management Corp., ARC's Techline, Environment Council of Alberta, the Waste Assistance Branch, the Environment Library, Communications, Pesticides, Education Branch, the Recycling Branch, . . . all give out good information – the only problem is that you get transferred a million times before you get to the right place.

*Awareness – many people in Alberta aren't aware that we already have many environmental problems and we must take care not to create more.*

- Awareness – many people in Alberta aren't aware that we already have many environmental problems and we must take care not to create more.
- Congratulations in this respect for "Environment Views", a fine example of an educational tool. More along this avenue is necessary.
- Regular reporting on the state of the environment is an excellent idea. This information should be disseminated with local newspapers several times a year.

## Programs and Initiatives You Suggested

- Use the news media - publications, etc. to educate and inform the public of the positive aspects of our economic and cultural development. The public is often bombarded with too much negative information.
- Let the U. of A. people help with extension activities – tree planting, food handling, farming, etc. Let them show us how to do things safely, cheaply, and with an environment ethic.
- Undergo wholesale curriculum changes so that students become more responsible to the environment in comparison to their parents and grandparents.
- Alberta Environment should also be giving out information in cases of environmental contamination. An example is publishing information (quoted from scientific references) on $H_2S$ during a major well blowout such as Lodgepole.
- Awareness of what you throw out – aerosol cans, styrofoam cups, less plastic.
- Assisting small towns and rural communities in education and awareness, eg. environmental impact of everyday policies and decisions made by local government and local citizens; eg. assisting with toxic round-up days, paper recycling pick-up, etc.
- Educate all the public truthfully about the dangers of our over greedy society and grasping consumerism. Teach them alternative life-style practices that help our environment, eg. alternative cleaning products, composting, etc.
- Offer mandatory courses on the use of pesticides by farmers and other applicators.
- Encourage the formation of "Environment and Conservation Clubs" for elementary school children (something similar to the Scouts and Girl Guide Clubs).
- Educate the public on modern forestry practice.
- Prepare a process for public input into project evaluation. Encourage the "non-radical" segment of society to actively participate in this process.
- Alberta Environment should also organize forums, seminars, workshops, and even celebrations to bring people together to forge common alliances on environmental issues. The Alberta Rivers Conference is an example. We need more dialogue and less bickering.

- A Nature Day (or week at camp) for schools – like the one used in Toronto I saw on The Nature Of Things with David Suzuki.
- Please use environmental groups for your data collecting and try to get back to the earth. The locals are the best source of info and will save you quite a bit of money.
- I recommend Government initiate a series of TV programmes on environmental alternatives and technological choices . . . allowing public participation through phone-in voting on open line discussions intended to reach a wide audience and a broad spectrum of opinion.
- Start public campaigns to tell people to drive less and to use snowmobiles, skidoos, A.T.V.s and motorcycles for dirt-biking less.
- Licences and permits cannot be given to industry without the input of citizens.
- Rather than rely on industry and government with its tame and fearful scientists to tell you what it wants, look to the people. After all, to them you owe your greatest loyalty.
- Listen to your own counsellors. The Environment Council of Alberta has been ignored time and time again. Politicians have been repeatedly and successfully pressured by interest groups to compromise on complex environmental impacts on threat of job losses, capital withdrawal, etc.
- Allow room for and encourage more input and environmental suggestions from the general public. Only those opposing attend environmental hearings on specific projects.
- The next time the government wants my opinion, put it on television instead of using all this paper to try out ideas on me. It looked real nice, but it ended up in my garbage after I read it. Just multiply that by how many households you sent this to and give yourself a slap on the hand.
- Community Support: enlist support of local community associations and environmental groups in spreading awareness and providing feedback to government on environmental problems and solutions.
- Is the public being exposed to unbiased reporting of environmental issues? Journalists must report the news; however, ACCESS could be used to present a balanced "no nonsense" view on the present and future impact of all environmental effects from industry, consumer products and agriculture.
- Providing information on alternatives to us of toxic house and garden products.
- Citizens must have information and input into F.M.A.s before they are given away to outside companies.
- Citizens in the community living near mega projects should also be asked to monitor emissions and there should be a toll free number for them to call should they detect unusual situations. The telephone number should be well published and easy to remember.

# Action on Environmental Protection

***Albertans are committed to protecting our environment by anticipating problems and preventing or mitigating environmental impacts of policies, programs, decisions, and development activities.***

## The Alberta Government:

1. is committed to ensuring a consistent high level of environmental quality for all Albertans.
2. requires the use of best available demonstrated technology to control contaminant emissions.
3. monitors and evaluates ambient quality and emission sources to ensure environmental objectives are being met.
4. promotes and pursues waste reduction and recycling strategies to both protect our environment and conserve our resources.
5. views reclamation as an integral part of industry's ongoing operations and insists it be pre-planned.
6. promotes efficient operation and maintenance of facilities to reduce emissions and increase performance.

## What You Said - Overview

Of all the topics in the mission statement, this one generated the largest number of responses from the public. People are concerned about the deteriorating quality of our environment. They support initiatives designed to reverse activities detrimental to our water, air, land, forests and wildlife. The respondents, in the majority, endorse the best technology available for pollution monitoring and control. In fact, the public demands it. Albertans are calling upon their government to implement firm policies and meaningful regulatory practices. Many people are telling their government that, as citizens involved in positive efforts to protect the environment, they are willing to play their part, "we won't let you down."

*All government decisions must be made with a global perspective in mind.*

The central issue of concern was the environmental effects of pulp and paper mill development in the province. The majority strongly oppose such development. Many call for the closure of those already in place. A few respondents who do not oppose mills and their development do require strict standards and pollution control measures be enforced to reduce pollution and eventually to achieve "0" level emissions.

The topic of second most concern was recycling. Every person who commented on this issue supported the concept. However, it was also pointed out that "recycling is a short term solution" and "waste reduction is a far better solution." Many suggested paper recycling as an alternative industry to pulp and paper mill development. Some respondents would like Alberta to become the recycling centre for the whole country and offered many suggestions on how to develop this industry.

Clearly of major importance to Albertans is the protection of our forests and wildlife. The large response and the tone of the comments indicate that this issue is an emotional one. Albertans are demanding that our forests and wildlife habitat must be preserved for present and future generations. They also recognize the value of these resources for maintaining the diversity of the natural environment and the balance of the ecosystem.

Albertans offer many practical suggestions on ways both the government and the citizens of the province can take action on protecting their environment.

## Your Comments

*Alberta Environment must ensure that industrialization does not compromise the quality of Alberta's natural resources.*

- I feel environment should encompass more than just air, land and water. I am deeply concerned about the biological aspects of our environment – forests, fish and wildlife, and hope these aspects are offered as much if not more protection than the physical aspects.
- All government decisions must be made with a global perspective in mind.
- It is the height of foolishness to have foreign-controlled companies coming here to harvest our forests. Forests provide oxygen to our atmosphere, and when forests are cut down, though replanted, it would be years before the same amount of oxygen is produced. Also, removal of forests changes the climate of a country, usually for the worst. Let's clean up our own act, before we complain about the rain forest of Brazil being destroyed.
- Every upstream polluter mortgages the future of these downstream users, and that section of our water policy must be changed.
- Protection of our agriculture land. Far too much of our agriculture land is being used up for highways, industry and housing (eg. Red Deer). Also, because of the low priority of our society with agricultural land, products and farm prosperity, this trend seems impossible to stop.
- Air quality concern: prevailing winds and fumes in the city.

- Alberta Environment needs more flexible policies, ones that can be more aptly modified and ratified as issues arise, I feel that our previous policies were slow to "change with the times".
- Alberta Environment must ensure that industrialization does not compromise the quality of Alberta's natural resources. Poor farming, poor forestry practices, and air and water pollution must be minimized to ensure Alberta's future. Alberta Environment's priorities must lie with regulatory practices that have real meaning.
- Overall province-wide we should be worrying a lot more about the many small pollutants instead of the large companies that are well monitored and policed. The large amount of road spills in the Edmonton area over the past 12-18 months is very disturbing.
- I feel that, to date, our ministry of environment has been doing little more than paying lip service to environmental concerns.

*Every upstream polluter mortgages the future of these downstream users.*

- The best hope for the environment is the technical improvement of the efficiency of the resource-based processes. This efficiency improvement can include better technology, recycling, secondary industry, and multiple use.
- I believe that where technology exists to reduce pollution, companies, municipalities, and citizens should be forced to switch over.
- Pulp mills must be made to function without polluting our air or water. This is technically feasible now.
- There are no environmentally acceptable kraft process pulp mills in the world. They all pollute.
- It is evident that most plants spill pollutants into streams and rivers, particularly when government inspection teams are absent during nights and holidays.
- I feel we need highly trained operators to run and maintain pollution control facilities . . . developing better training certification systems for industrial operations. We have a system for municipal operator certification, but no system of ensuring competent operators in industrial facilities.

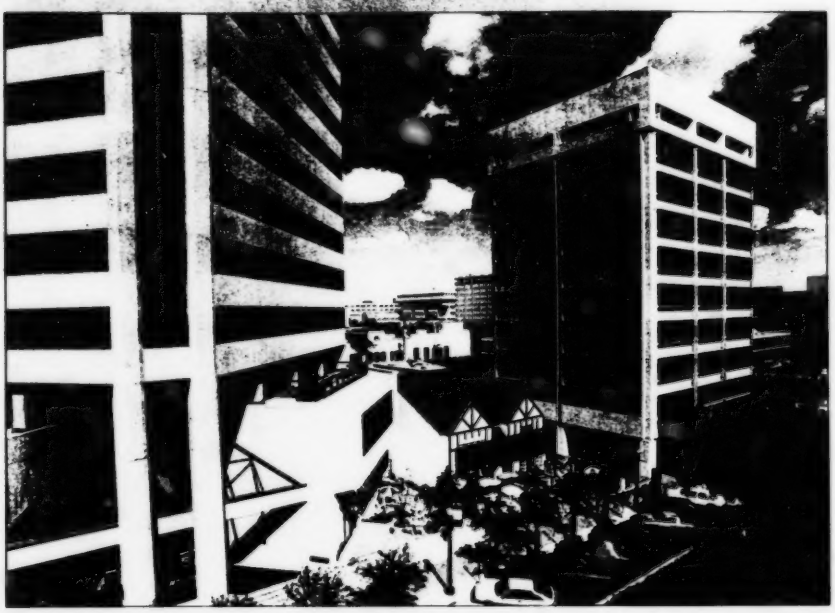
## Programs and Initiatives You Suggested

- Force cities like Edmonton to quit dumping salt and street refuse directly into the rivers.
- I think that the water standard should be based on the cleanliness of the water when it is taken out of the river or the lake.
- Adopt California vehicle emission standards.
- Stop the use of coal-fired generators and steel mills.
- Stop the use of temporary river and stream crossings that are causing siltation.
- Alberta should make an immediate commitment to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20% until more is learned about global warming and climate change.
- Ban the use of fluorocarbons.
- A 100% stop of all sulphur emissions.
- Encourage local development of biodegradable diapers.

*Any product that is recycled should be cheaper than non-recycled items.*

- All coffee filters, paper towels, toilet paper, etc. would have to be unbleached.
- The new pulp mills that are proposed for Alberta should be persuaded to include facilities to manufacture recycled paper and/or provide de-inking facilities.
- Industry should be encouraged to sponsor research, development and monitoring of more environmentally efficient methods.
- Increase the size of the agency responsible for monitoring the emission practices of industry in Alberta.
- Inspection and monitoring should be performed during irregular periods and intervals.
- Increase monitoring for gas plants, downstream of pulp mills, and coal mines (tailings). Monitor sewage pipes in cities. Many companies are and have been dumping into it for years. Sunday is a good day as the inspectors aren't usually working.
- Car pooling should be encouraged to cut down on air pollutants.
- Encourage car manufacturers to provide pollution free cars.
- Let people commute (mass transit). Sponsor and support mass transit.
- Recognition (in positive sense) to industries who demonstrate environmental concern.
- Stricter qualifications to obtain and retain a truck driver's licence. Most oil and other substance spills are caused by trucks overturning.
- Refill containers should be used to encourage re-use of original containers. This requires very careful labelling so as not to confuse dangerous contents with harmless ones, eg. bleach with softeners.
- Encourage repair and parts businesses that renew appliances to discourage every family from throwing out.
- Build paper and other materials recycling plants.
- Provide full or partial tax exemption for the manufacturing of products from recycled materials.
- Municipalities could be fined for dumping garbage exceeding a certain weight limit. This could stimulate the individual's interest and support of recycling strategies.
- Provide "seed funding" for individuals with new products which are environmentally friendly and utilize or promote recycled materials.
- Industry should be forced to develop packaging that is biodegradable and packaging that can be recycled.
- Increase sales tax on non-biodegradable and non-recyclable products. Increase sales tax on products manufactured from virgin materials (non-recycled).
- Every hamlet, village, town and city must have a recycle depot with regular pick-ups.
- Our sewage should be utilized for effluent irrigation and, in combination with organic wastes, to make compost.
- Get rid of programs and subsidies that create artificial economies at the expense of the environment.
- A post secondary trainer's facility in environmental management.

# Polluters Pay



***The costs of preventing and reclaiming environmental impacts will be borne by the polluter.***

## The Alberta Government:

1. promotes and pursues waste management strategies requiring users to plan for their wastes from the time a product is created to its safe disposal, and ensures that users are responsible for the costs of this process.
2. requires that polluters shall remedy environmental disturbances and contamination.
3. uses various forms of economic and regulatory devices, such as security deposits, to protect the environment.
4. requires certain industries to have emergency controls and plans in place to respond to accidental releases of contaminants in order to protect human health and our environment.

## What You Said - Overview

All respondents supported the "polluters pay" concept. Albertans demand that polluters be "accountable at all costs" and in particular that they pay all costs associated with corrective action. Industry, not the taxpayer, say respondents, must be responsible for ensuring the environment is preserved, or in cases of pollution, returned to a healthy state. Many Albertans feel that pollution prevention and correction costs must be taken into account in the financial planning of any project industry wishes to undertake. A number of respondents opposed government subsidies of private developers' environmental protection operations, since such subsidies are believed to distort the marketplace. People want the "true cost of a project" to include environmental protection and disposal costs. The public sees monetary incentives for "clean business" as positive support for "sustainable environmental quality and resource use." However, for business and

industry which continue to pollute and degrade the environment. Albertans demand severe fines, prosecution, and government power to close down operations. Among many recommendations, some favour special bonds or security deposits be posted by industry to cover any clean-up operation.

## Your Comments

*We shouldn't give plants years to clean up pollution. Shut them down until they clean up their act.*

- Be tough on polluters.
- Make companies who destroy the environment pay to repair it.
- I have worked on oil rigs and in a pulp mill and can vouch for their intentional accidents of pollution. The fines must be increased to completely cover the cost of cleanup without the government subsidizing the cost.
- Fines for environmental abuse must be severe, including jail terms. Doesn't an arsonist go to jail for starting a forest fire?
- I would rather pay when I buy the product than pay taxes to be used in the clean-up.
- Government (the public) should not subsidize costs of private developers' environmental preservation operations; the market price for the goods and services must include this.
- Companies that take steps to reduce pollution levels would be rewarded rather than penalized in terms of profit and loss.
- Pulp plant air pollution at Hinton and Grande Prairie and oil sands plant effluent at Ft. McMurray are some examples where I believe we have not adequately insisted that industry clean up its act.
- I assume that large waste generators will continue to have negotiable disposal and pollution requirements and this is a price to pay for economic development.
- We shouldn't give plants years to clean up pollution. Shut them down until they clean up their act. They will respond quicker.
- Clean the damage already done to rivers, land and air. I would like nothing better than to swim and fish in the Wapiti River again as I did 20 years ago.

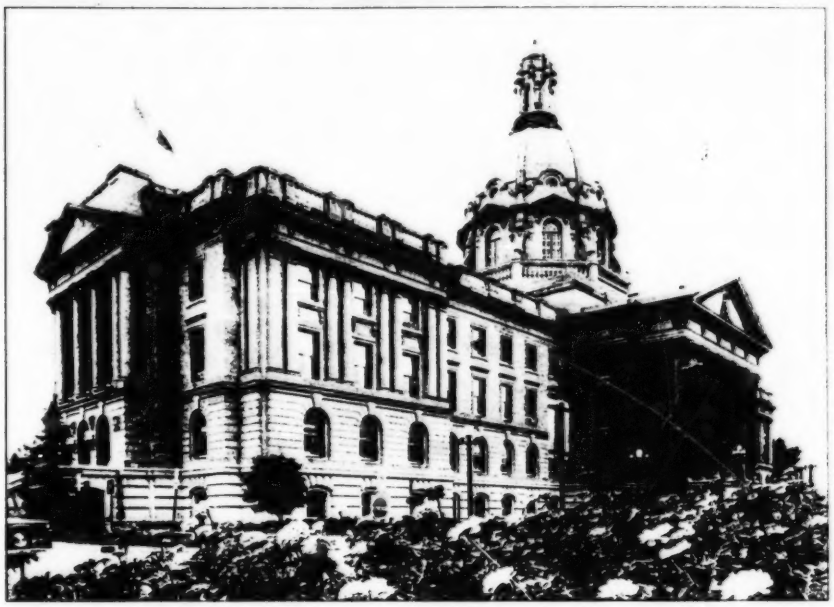
## Programs and Initiatives You Suggested

- Apply financial incentives to modify and screen economic activities in support of sustainable environmental quality and resource use. Incentives may be fees, fines, credits, taxes, and the like. These should be applied to both production and resource use.
- Bonds of an amount adequate to handle . . . a cleanup should be posted by companies before they begin operations.
- Tax according to waste output — on an accelerating scale. Jail for serious pollution knowingly done.
- Don't raise taxes. Find economic alternatives, implement user-pay policies.

*We need to develop initiatives ensuring that waste generators pay for the cost of waste disposal.*

- My recommendation to these companies would be that they must be able to feed any effluent forthcoming into their own water intake pipe. (At the hearings they stated that their effluent was very clean.) . . . Let them recycle their effluent.
- Use of incinerator method of garbage disposal.
- $50 fines for littering anywhere, especially around fast food outlets.
- Develop a fee scale for dumping garbage in industry, businesses and homes. I would feel comfortable with being charged with throwing out more than one bag a week.
- I suggest you look into policies that will reduce the amount of packaging.
- A strict program for reforestation for pulp and lumber companies paid for by the companies.
- We need to develop initiatives ensuring that waste generators pay for the cost of waste disposal. A carbon tax has been proposed by the Greenprint for Canada Committee to finance a national energy conservation program to reduce carbon emissions, and a national reforestation program to recycle carbon emissions. I concur with this proposal.
- Consider a corporation user tax on resources like forests, coal, oil, and gas to clean up and reforest.
- Polluters must pay severe fines and should be required to pay an environmental tax, the proceeds of which would go towards environmental protection and education.
- All plastics should be labelled as to what kind of plastic they are . . . this will facilitate their separation prior to collection. Also, ban non-recyclable plastics. Biodegradable plastics are also a problem because they need sunlight and oxygen to break down. This is not occurring in the landfills. The issue is so complex, but not impossible to sort out. The plastics industry should be forced to comply with government regulations, or be banned from selling their product. The landfill solution should be re-evaluated when it comes to plastics. The packaging industry should also be monitored for overpackaging abuses. Bans, taxes, and fines would be helpful in this area.
- Chemicals, paints and other toxic substances should be picked up regularly by local authorities (or well known drop off sites should be established). The community drives for these substances are a good idea but need to be better advertised and last longer. Rural people need access to these services too.
- Tax heated garages, tax snowmobiles, tax quads, and all other energy consuming toys.
- Have an emergency clean-up crew in place to immediately clean up spills that threaten ground water, etc., then send the bill to the party at fault. Delays in clean up should not occur because of arguing over who is going to do it. Can such clean-up crews be sponsored by the Department of National Defence?

# Legislative and Regulatory Action



***Albertans' expectations for vigorous protection and enforcement will be translated into comprehensive and publicly responsive legislative action.***

## The Alberta Government:

1. will develop and maintain new comprehensive legislation to ensure that protection and enforcement action meet current and evolving needs.
2. ensures enforcement actions are timely and appropriate for both specified contraventions and continued non-compliance.
3. will continue to apply enforcement firmly, fairly and consistently to all parties, including individuals, industries, municipalities, crown corporations and government agencies.

## What You Said - Overview

The comments received were overwhelmingly in favour of strong, comprehensive legislation to protect Alberta's environment. The citizens of the province want the new legislation to be a government priority. Many are demanding more stringent anti-pollution laws, laws "with teeth" to deal with polluters. The enforcement of such laws concerns many people who, at present, see polluters getting only "a little slap on the wrist" for infractions of the present laws. The public strongly agrees that enforcement action must be fair, firm and consistent; meaningful penalties which are "severe, certain and swift" would help ensure everyone, including government, complies. Some would go so far as to make pollution a criminal offence if intent is proven. Many are asking for new legislation which will clearly "define pollution" and set out who in Alberta is a polluter. Albertans are looking for a determined and disciplined government, one not "afraid" to enforce strict laws, to see that strong measures are taken to protect their environment. A long list of suggestions and ideas was generated by people who are waiting to see new legislation replace present policies.

## Your Comments

*Alberta Environment has to put more teeth into its laws . . .*

*It's about time we take a strong approach to polluters.*

- The voices of Albertans should be a critical influence in the content of the new act because we all share the same air, water, and land. Therefore, we must also share the responsibility of protecting it.
- It's about time the environmental protection act was comprehensively overhauled. Some people have been polluting the province long enough. It's about time we take a strong approach to polluters.
- Alberta Environment has to put more teeth into its laws . . . . The most comprehensive environmental legislation in North America and the political will to enforce the legislation.
- The initiative to have all of the various acts dealing with clean air and water consolidated into one Act seems superfluous. A consolidated Act would be a very large package, and it appears to me that the current series of individual Acts is much more workable and understandable than a single piece of legislation, plus all of its regulations, could be.
- In developing environmental policy, officials should not only take human needs and concerns into consideration. We share this province with a vast array of other life forms and it is our duty to provide for their needs as well as our own.
- Alberta is a unique environment, with habitats ranging from montane to prairie to boreal forest and river drainages to three oceans through several watersheds. To develop an all-encompassing policy to allow yet control the use of such a resource is a challenge, but one which must be met to allow our citizens continued enjoyment and use of our resources in the future.
- Alberta Environment must have the power to "charge", "levy fines", and "issue orders" which include forcing industry/businesses to clean up and pay for all damages caused by them.
- Fine those that are not meeting the standards or better yet – shut them down until they meet the standards.
- Alberta badly needs environmental legislation that clearly defines who is a polluter and provides for enforcement steps to ensure clean-up.
- There should also be provisions in the law to make pollution a criminal offence if repeated intent is proven (on top of the fine).
- I would like to issue a challenge to the Alberta Government. If you are committed to achieving the protection, improvement and wise use of our environment – STAND UP! Legislate tough laws and regulations – so tough that Alberta would truly be recognized as a province that really cares. It is a necessity that more and more people realize that the protection of the environment is the most important issue of our times.
- We need very strong legislation to protect Alberta. Prosecution must be part of this. Just because our laws may be better than those of other provinces doesn't mean they're good enough.
- Fines for pollution have to be high enough that polluters will find out that it is financially better to control pollution rather than just pay a token fine.

*Make sure everyone (including the government) follows the rules.*

- There should be no exceptions.
- Meaningful penalties (severe, certain and swift) must be given to offenders (regardless of status) who refuse to meet our environmental standards.
- Stop being soft on large companies just because they create jobs. These companies are in Alberta because they make money and will continue to stay here even if pollution laws are tougher.
- Have an environmental policy that holds our environmental protection as the primary concern regardless of business and development pressures.
- However, we have been told for many years that our province has the highest standards in all of Canada. The unfortunate part is that the rules have never been enforced, which means the high standards are therefore meaningless.
- Make sure everyone (including the government) follows the rules.
- The Government of Alberta should have the right to penetrate the corporate shell and charge chief operating officers under the Criminal Code.
- I was glad to see the Environment Minister is interested in hearing what the people have to say. I have to wonder just how much effect my comments will have. I consider myself to be an optimistic person, but when it comes to a government that puts economic development before protection of the environment, I don't have much hope.
- Last but not least, when introducing your new environment protection act to the Legislature, please take into account our aboriginal people and their culture.

## Programs and Initiatives You Suggested

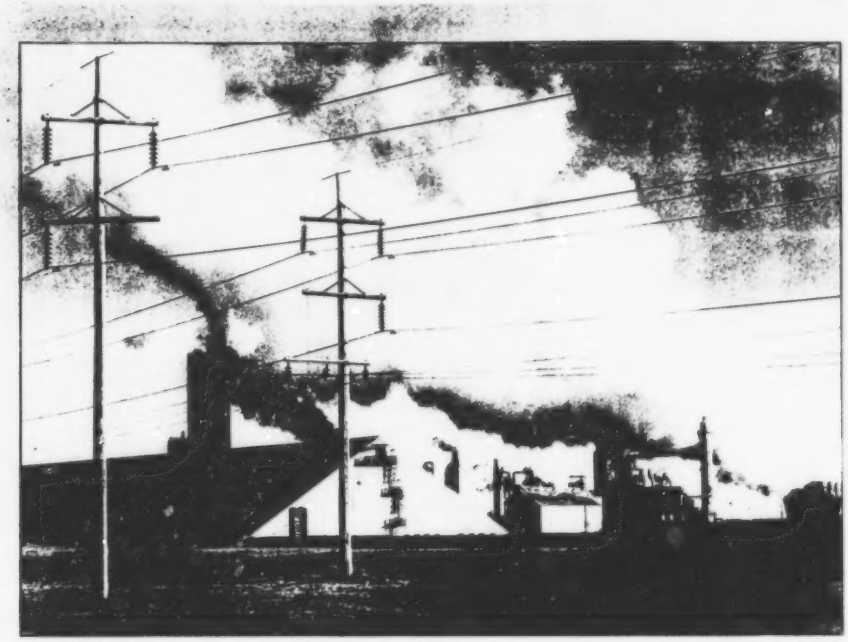
*Do not let the lawyers take control.*

*There needs to be a reasonable approach to regulatory approvals (single window approach to government approval), otherwise too much money is spent on red tape and useless delays.*

- Make senior corporate officers liable for prison terms for hazardous waste spills and 'environmental crimes'. Make prison term for first offence optional, based on seriousness of offence, of up to two years. Make prison term of one year to five years (maximum) mandatory for second offences. For each subsequent offence, increase prison term by a minimum of five years to a maximum of ten years.
- The Environmental Protection Act should define the conditions under which the individual can invite "government" to appear before the courts to defend actions brought on by an individual or group of individuals for alleged failure to enforce the proposed environmental protection act. There should be an orderly mechanism for the adjudication of issues arising between the public, "government" and the project developer.
- Do not let the lawyers take control. Environmental laws can be written simply and without lawyers. The laws should be straightforward with specified penalties for non-compliance to pre-set standards. Lawyers are counter-productive, and will waste unlimited amounts of taxpayers' money and will tie up courts and industry while not achieving a clean environment with a productive society.
- There needs to be a reasonable approach to regulatory approvals (single window approach to government approval), otherwise too much money is spent on red tape and useless delays.

- Work toward developing legislation where urban sprawl would not be allowed on agricultural land.
- Introduce legislation requiring all kraft pulp mills in Alberta to reduce the amount of organochlorides in their effluent outflow by 50% by April 1, 1992, and to eliminate them completely by April 1, 1994.
- I would like to see some kind of law, in each municipality, governing the destroying of little bluffs or trees and the filling of low areas that fill with spring run-off.
- Legislation should be enacted so that an environmental impact assessment statement is required before any major project which impacts on the environment is started.
- Legislation for all citizens, businesses, institutions, etc. to use 50% recycled materials by 1995 – 100% by 2000.
- Legislate manufacturers to cut down on packaging.
- Require by law the use of rural and municipal compost and recycling programs.
- The basic format of the new Environmental Act should be similar in structure to the way public health legislation has operated in Alberta for many years. The new Act should set up regional environmental boards. Membership to be composed of municipal councillors from local governments in the region. Each Board should administer the Environmental Act and regulations in its own area and take legal action when necessary against contravenors.
- Legislate changes which will require newspapers to contain 75% or more recycled paper as has already been done in the U.S.
- Ban the sale of disposable diapers by 1995.
- The Government of Alberta should pass a bylaw requiring recycling of paper in all major cities, all government offices, etc.
- Put teeth into legislation to get rid of rusting hulks and cars in backyards, alleys, ditches.
- Enforce hospitals to cut down substantially their use of disposable items. Hospitals are big offenders in environmental issues.
- Some formal type of mediation mechanism for environmental disputes should be established as an alternative to legal court settlement mechanisms.
- There is a need for a superfund to compensate innocent harmed parties, especially those individuals harmed by spills of emissions of toxic substances. Recipients of disbursements from the superfund should not forfeit their right to tort litigations against the polluter. The government would be responsible for redeeming superfund expenditures from the polluter and/or successful tort litigants.
- Municipalities should enforce their environmental bylaws.
- Tougher penalties for wildlife offences.

# Integrated Decision-Making



***Protection of the environment will not be compromised by future development. Developmental decisions will be made through a process that ensures wise use of resources while considering economic growth and prosperity.***

## The Alberta Government:

1. manages water quality and quantity together, recognizing the interdependence of surface water, ground water and land.
2. manages river basins on a multiple use basis.
3 requires consultation among all provincial departments and agencies to ensure environmental matters are given the fullest consideration.

## What You Said - Overview

Most of the respondents to this principle's policies are clear about one thing: Alberta's environment should not be sacrificed in the interests of industrial development. People feel strongly that integrated decision-making is vital to wise policy-making, and they urge that all governments be "extremely selective" about companies they allow into our province. Albertans are demanding that industry demonstrate a sincere commitment to a healthy environment. A number of letters indicated concern over what is perceived as "a conflict of interest" for Alberta Environment: the Department is in the position of planning large projects dependent on water resources (dams in particular); at the same time, it is responsible for environmental protection, licences and fines in these developments.

Albertans are also very concerned about the deteriorating quality of the province's rivers, streams, ground water and soil. Many call for strong measures to ensure high quality and sufficient quantity for future use. The public is concerned about the damming of rivers and suggests doing so only when absolute necessity is proven, and when these projects do not

destroy wilderness and recreation areas. The public realizes the complexity of managing surface water systems, as well as ground water. Moreover, people believe that no one use of water should inhibit any other use. Respondents are asking all government departments to work together on stricter monitoring of industry, municipalities, and agribusiness. Many would give Alberta Environment more political power within the wider government, and would advocate environmental monitoring be given top priority by all departments.

## Your Comments

- All development is not desirable and we should pick and choose which developments are compatible with the environment.
- I hope you will be able to steer our government and leaders into achieving the balance between development and preservation.
- The adversarial position taken by industry and government flies in the face of such an integrated decision-making process.
- The department cannot be seen as a protector and developer at the same time. I urge you to make this change as soon as possible and to resist the department's philosophy. Please remember that it is Environment who is planning and promoting the Oldman Dam, Little Bow Dam, etc. Even-though design is undertaken by PWSS, Environment is still the proponent and ultimate owner of these projects.
- How do you propose to "Not compromise the protection of the environment by future development" when the Oldman (Three Rivers) Dam is going through, and the massive pulp mills in northern Alberta are receiving tremendous government support?
- I believe that of all the elements of the environment most prone to attack in Alberta, the water element is the most critical.
- I hate being ignorant as to what I'm getting when I drink tap water.
- Polluted drinking water would be a poor trade-off for a few boards or some pulp.
- You seem to be managing river basins only for irrigation and hydroelectric projects (eg. Oldman River) and are disregarding other attributes – you may call it multiple use, but we disagree.
- Forgive me for sounding sardonic, but water by itself does not need to be managed, just as the clouds do not need to be managed. Industry needs to be managed.
- Get the whole government into the act. Alberta Environment can't do it all. There needs to be a revamping of policies and legislation in other departments as well.
- Alberta Environment should be a leader in environmental matters and should provide leadership to other government departments, agencies, Crown corporations and be a role model for private enterprise.

*Alberta Environment can't do it all. There needs to be a revamping of policies and legislation in other departments as well.*

- The inclusion of the Fish and Wildlife Department under the Forestry Ministry just prior to the pulp mill development and their subsequent silence on issues under their mandate is reprehensible.

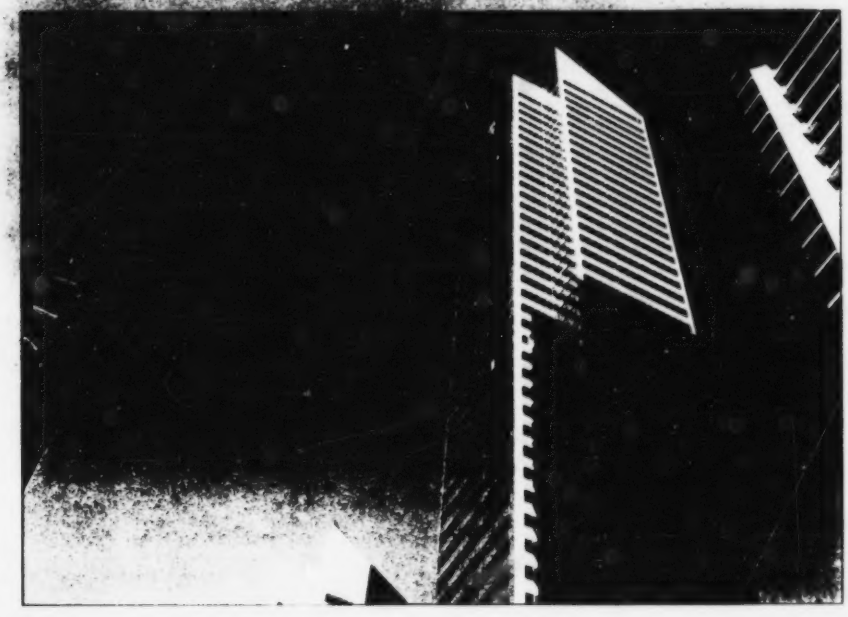
## Programs and Initiatives You Suggested

- I would like to try to see us stop using our rivers as dumping grounds for municipal sewage and industrial waste.
- Protect natural water supplies from pollution from pulp mills and other industries.
- Curtail river dams where they conflict with wilderness/recreation areas. Irrigation projects in particular should be low priority given the present crop surpluses and farm subsidization.
- I believe there should be more dams built upstream on our rivers – we must store more run off water, to provide water for more irrigation projects, and our cities and towns.
- Is there any possibility of reducing the volumes of water allocated to irrigation districts, for example, or of buying back licences?
- Control our water supply by building dams where feasible.
- Hydro dams must be carefully planned so that the ecological benefits outweigh the environmental damage.
- All farmers should be on a metered irrigation system to preserve water.
- Mandatory meters for water consumption in all houses.
- Perhaps a solution would be to have cities install their water intakes down river from their city or town. This would quickly generate a need to purify their waste and clean up the water. This is currently being done in some European cities.
- We may have to reduce the amount of economic gain to protect our environment.
- My own environmental vision for Alberta is not to stop development, but government must be extremely selective about which companies to allow to develop in this province.
- Dams are not a good answer to water shortage problems. Their environmental effects on streams, fish, wildlife and aesthetic values are too severe.
- Have other government departments engaged in environmental protection and enhancement – eg. Provincial Parks and Wildlife should be part and parcel of the Department of the Environment.
- Participate officially in and sponsor media events on behalf of the Canadian Heritage Rivers program. We've got many of Canada's rivers, Mr. Klein. Even more important, we have their headwaters, draining into three discreet and huge watersheds; we've got to show the initiative here.
- It should also recognize certain rivers as part of the National Heritage Rivers program, being one of the very few provinces not already involved.

*My own environmental vision for Alberta is not to stop development, but government must be extremely selective about which companies to allow to develop in this province.*

- Department should stay on the other side of the table questioning the validity of data/information presented by the resource user/exploiter, it should never try to be a mouthpiece of other government departments or developers.
- Government should give priority to the Forestry Department with additional money and qualified people to do a proper job of forestry management.
- Environmental Managers: Appoint someone in each government department, municipality, or industry whose prime concern is environment to ensure that environmental practices are being adhered to by all agencies and to define environmental goals and objectives and environmental screening for developments.

# Intergovernmental Cooperation



***Albertans recognize their responsibility to other Canadians and strive to prevent and minimize transboundary environmental impacts. Therefore, Albertans need their Government to work cooperatively with other provinces, the territories and the federal government to achieve environmental protection, improvement and wise use, always recognizing our constitutional responsibilities.***

## The Alberta Government:

1. takes a leadership role in achieving the coordination of policies and programs of all other levels of government as they relate to environmental matters in Alberta.
2. works to ensure that Alberta's constitutional responsibilities for environmental management and protection are fulfilled.
3. manages water for the benefit to Albertans and downstream users and will not be party to any undertaking to divert water beyond Canadian borders.
4. ensures that only Alberta generated special wastes are disposed of in the province.
5. will be involved in coordinating national and international marketing of Alberta special waste management technology, research and training.

## What You Said - Overview

Of all the ten principles, this one received the fewest responses. Those who commented agreed Alberta should work in complete cooperation with the federal government, and with Canada's other provinces and territories toward environmental progress. Some respondents suggested that pollution control standards should be the same across Canada so that Alberta's high standards will not deter industrial and business development. All felt Alberta should be sensitive to any activity which would jeopardize the environment of our neighbours. Many felt transboundary politics should not get in the way of cooperation and accountability to neighbours' environmental concerns. In fact, many Albertans expect the Government of Alberta to take a leadership role in Canadian and international environmental cooperation, acknowledging the global nature of

environmental concerns. The Alberta Government's commitment not to divert water "beyond Canadian borders" was supported by all who expressed an opinion on the subject. These people expressed the hope that this commitment is sincere and will remain firm. As well, respondents opposed inter-basin transfer of water. Public opinion about disposal of hazardous wastes was divided between those who feel the Swan Hills facility should accept only wastes generated in Alberta, and those who believe the province should accept and encourage the disposal of hazardous wastes from other provinces. The latter feel that the profit from such activities would defray the costs of running the plant. Albertans are promoting development and marketing of technologies which address safe methods of hazardous waste disposal. Most respondents expect Alberta to assist other provinces and nations to develop suitable facilities for disposal of the hazardous wastes generated within their own boundaries.

## Your Comments

***Have a bold voice and tackle the federal government about unsafe environmental problems in Canada and other countries.***

- I am surprised that the former mayor of Calgary would propose a statement on intergovernmental cooperation that doesn't mention municipalities.
- Alberta should work in complete cooperation with the Government of Canada and with the other provinces in tackling environmental problems, taking a leadership role in all areas.
- Have a bold voice and tackle the federal government about unsafe environmental practices in Canada and other countries.
- You should be an active, leading member of the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment and other federal-provincial committees such as that on acid depositions.
- The danger of not having the same standards across the board is that one province like Alberta could end up with the highest environmental standards. This could mean very limited industrial development and investment in Alberta – therefore, creating a province with highest environmental standards, highest unemployment and lowest standard of living.
- Fight Ottawa on their approach in establishing "a consistent national policy." This statement has a singular interpretation "what is good and necessary for the heavily populated, environmentally polluted area between Hamilton and Montreal is good for the rest of Canada."
- No exporting of water to the United States.
- Water is going to be a challenge as the south's population grows.
- Won't damming the Milk River affect water use for downstream users in the USA?
- Under no circumstances should we ever import hazardous waste from other countries or provinces. The viability of an expanded plant would almost certainly necessitate importation.

- Landfills or hazardous waste sites of all kinds are very difficult to locate – so that using Swan Hills for non-Alberta wastes may mean that no space remains for Alberta's special wastes in the next century.
- Alberta is doing an excellent job with hazardous wastes & generally liquid waste and sewage.
- No transportation of hazardous waste across the provincial borders. We keep our waste, they keep theirs.
- I am not opposed to others using our Swan Hills waste disposal plant.
- I feel there is nothing wrong with accepting hazardous wastes from other provinces as long as they adhere to strict regulatory transport guidelines.
- We have established a special waste disposal facility. We should not only export this technology as planned, but we should be handling other Canadian wastes for profit when we can do so safely.
- The government should continue to develop and sell technologies which address recycling and environmentally safe methods for disposing of hazardous goods.

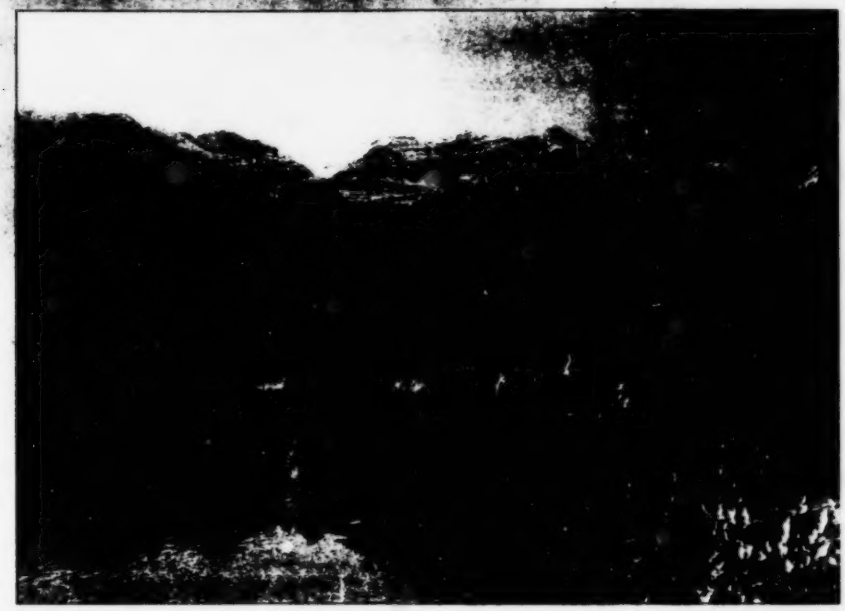
## Programs and Initiatives You Suggested

- Charge a premium price to out-of-province, Canadian sources to dispose of their hazardous wastes at Swan Hills (double the price charged to Alberta sources).
- Negotiate with Saskatchewan and Manitoba governments to agree to establish a centralized rubber tire recovery plant, probably in south central Saskatchewan. This plant to use a nitrogen "furnace " to freeze them, then flail, recover, bag and ship waste recovered to asphalt contractors, offshore users and others capable of recycling or remanufacturing of rubber products, including tires of various usage not requiring the same specs, eg. bicycle, baby prams, rollers, patio bricks, railcrossing pads, etc. This plant could possibly serve a portion of the USA, as well, and receive suitable payment for their involvement in the capital expense or user fees, as per negotiations. Employment could be locals or better yet prison inmates who would have wages paid into a trust account for support of their families or to assist them on return to society. These wages would have deductions for room and board, etc. in the normal life style pattern. It may be worth noting that Walla Walla Prison, Washington, USA, has a full mattress factory on site (run by a woman) and are competitive in the marketplace. Since waste tires are not a private business, you are not competing unfairly in the marketplace. The user fees already in Saskatchewan and Manitoba could then be used for other environmental needs and Alberta would not have to institute this additional tax levy.
- It should be a goal of Alberta Environment to make Alberta a world leading exporter of environmental management expertise and engineering.

*Impose strict rules and regulations to transportation and storage and handling of dangerous goods.*

- Alberta Environment/Alberta Government and municipal governments should set a strong example to the public by adopting strict procurement policies that require the purchase of recycled products, and set an example for others to admire.
- How about the Alberta Ministry of Environment offering an environment consulting service (for a fee) to similar ministries in other provinces. I feel that they could learn a great deal in the educational, legislative and law enforcement fields – as well as the concept of mutual cooperation, from your experience.
- Legislate that all Alberta fresh water will be for use of Albertans and river basin populations. It shall not be diverted or exported.
- Impose strict rules and regulations to transportation and storage and handling of dangerous goods.
- Make municipalities responsible for their own water and wastewater facilities. The government has spent millions and millions of dollars on facilities all over the province, and the municipalities always seem to come back on the government if there are problems. Why should the government continue to help the municipalities – should they not take some responsibility for their own doings?
- We could be on the forefront by assisting environmentally troubled countries with their policy implementation. We could send our experts abroad to help out and, in turn, get feedback on our own policies and technologies. This would create a positive international image for Alberta which could have economic benefits for us.

# Sustainable Development



***Albertans are dedicated to achieving sustainable development which ensures that the utilization of resources and the environment today does not impair their use by future generations.***

## The Alberta Government:

1. directly and in cooperation with others, manages water, land and air as sustaining elements of our environment for the benefit of future generations.
2. requires formal Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for all major developments. An EIA predicts the sustainability of these developments and determines whether impacts can be mitigated. If these conditions are not met, the project will not proceed.
3. maintains stream flows, protects basic water quality and instream uses to unsure that our rivers are sustained for future generations.
4. requires land to be reclaimed following development activity.

## What You Said - Overview

Sustainable development was discussed frequently throughout the public's response to the vision document. Albertans are strong supporters of this concept, generally agreeing that "a healthy economy should rest upon a healthy environment" which has to be preserved for further generations; the environment "should not be sacrificed for economic reasons." The people of this province feel that "short-term gains should never be put ahead of long-term benefits"; there has to be a balance between "development and preservation", between "progress" and nature. Sustainable development requires wise use of natural resources (ie. our water, land, air, forests and wildlife). Albertans are strongly opposed to any environmentally damaging project and they are particularly on guard against foreign industrialists creating projects which would exploit and jeopardize our environment. In particular, the majority of respondents strongly oppose pulp and paper mill developments of this nature. To

achieve sustainable development, many citizens are calling for a strengthening of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. Many feel current practices are not satisfactory; they advocate that an EIA be integral to planning any development project whether the proponent is government or the private sector; and that the cumulative impact of all industrial development in the area be assessed as well. Some people propose that the EIA process be carried out by a qualified and unbiased group without political interference. They want this process to be "not just political window-dressing." Of all the concerns regarding sustainable development, water quality tops the list for Albertans. Many are not satisfied with the term "basic water quality" some feel it is not specific enough while others want "not just basic quality of water but clean water". Several people pointed out that rivers support the entire surrounding natural area; human use can lead to disruption of the whole ecosystem supported by such water. Those who responded to the issue of land reclamation endorsed the government's policy that land be reclaimed following development activity. Most are asking for stricter requirements and enforcement of the land reclamation policy. There was particular support for the replanting of trees in logged areas. Albertans are aware that sustainable development requires a change in people's philosophy of life, attitudes, and value systems. They feel that present materialism and consumerism must be replaced by an appreciation of the natural world. This change, they feel, can be achieved through education. The public encourages Alberta Environment to practise and promote sustainable development, and calls for action now.

## Your Comments

***We can have the best of both worlds, economic development and a clean environment. In most cases it is just not necessary to significantly sacrifice one in order to achieve the other.***

- The present emphasis on endless economic growth and consumerism will be replaced by an appreciation of basic human values and appreciation of the natural world and all its richness and beauty.
- I am convinced that we can have the best of both worlds, economic development and a clean environment. In most cases it is just not necessary to significantly sacrifice one in order to achieve the other.
- Alberta Environment's priorities must lie with regulatory practices that have real meaning.
- There is a need for long-term balance in developing industries that affect our environment and the Alberta populace who desire clean water, air and land.
- Plan for the long-term.
- The raw resource exploitation in this province has one of the worst records in terms of environmental impact of any "progressive" first world country.
- Wildlife species, waterfowl, water and soil conservation are essential elements to the continuation of a lasting and viable use of our land base.

***Strengthen Alberta's environmental assessment process.***

- I would like to see some evidence of the government accepting sustainable development. It seems contradictory to provide grants to paper mills without requiring any percentage of used paper fibers or a de-inking facility.
- Is anyone interested in the way farmers "mine" their soil instead of "managing" their acres? Year by year every tree is disappearing from section after section – here in Grande Prairie area we'll soon have no rain because we have no trees and our land will (already is) be blown away. Farmers should be told – encouraged – helped – to plant shelterbelts every 80 rods in their fields. Poor thin soil on hilltops should never be allowed to go under cultivation.
- If the pulp mill project is carried out in Alberta, our boreal forests will be destroyed. Northern boreal forest which covers the northern half of Alberta, is very fragile and slow growing. Pressure of logging and pulp mill plants will destroy the fragile ecologic balance of a northern forest. The Getty government talks about tree planting and reforestation. This will work if the land and animals are able to wait 80-100 years for the forest to regrow.
- Water . . . must be managed to sustain the quality of all life.
- Strengthen Alberta's environmental assessment processes. The Canadian Environmental Advisory Council says our EIA process is one of the weakest in Canada.
- I'd like to see EIAs gain real power in the early stages of project planning rather than being after-the-fact mitigation measures.
- Our water is our most valuable resource and should never, never be sold on any long-term, non-reversible deals. We must always hold the trump cards here.
- We want more than just "basic water quality".
- We still have a relatively clean environment. The only major problems are some of our polluted rivers, but these can still be saved. It is not too late to clean up such rivers as the North Saskatchewan such that people at Fort Saskatchewan could swim in it without any harm.
- There is a need for a long-term vision . . . .
- We should also continue with strict land reclamation requirements.
- Stricter regulations for reforestation and reclamation of logged areas.
- The government should clearly set out guidelines for the environment, its protection and reclamation.

## Programs and Initiatives You Suggested

- Government programs and policies must change the direction of its agencies and corporate citizens to one of sustainable development rather than emphasizing growth and expansion.
- Change agricultural, industrial, and urban practices so that we work with nature, not against her.

*Change agricultural, industrial and urban practices so that we work with nature, not against her.*

*Put "conservation" rather than "maximum use" as a priority.*

- Alberta is well-known world wide for its environmental quality and excellence. I encourage you to uphold this trust by not being persuaded to give our precious land and waters away to uncaring individuals, whose only concern is financial gain; namely – pulp mills by foreign investors.
- Promotion of sustainable agricultural practices including a reduction in the dependency on fertilizers and chemicals, reduced cultivation of marginal lands.
- To encourage the use of renewable resources such as water, wind and solar power. Discourage usage of non-renewable resources.
- A complete inventory of our water resources written as a heritage document and a resolve to test all future developments against this. A complete inventory in the form of an understanding of nature of our ecology: plants, animals and other resources written as a heritage document against which all future developments can be measured.
- Maximum use of our resources. Renewable resources to be replaced where consumed. Non-renewable to be used at a rate required by industry in Canada and restrict export of raw materials.
- We should support those productive employments which maximize the value of renewable resources.
- We also need an honest assessment of our resources that involves a vested long-term interest in the future of Alberta.
- We must charge fair prices for water to make people choose conservation.
- Put "conservation" rather than "maximum use" as a priority.
- A strategy and action plan to attract industries and services which can meet our environmental standard and sustainable development.
- Insist on phased environmentally sustainable development to allow for the application of improving technology and resource management skills.
- EIA panels must consist of environment groups and some of your toughest opposition.
- Promote tourism rather than basic resource industry.
- If subsidies are granted to either agricultural enterprise or development/ industrial businesses, these must demonstrate a commitment to sustainable development practices.
- Resource people that are knowledgeable about the environment should be active consultants for the Alberta Government.
- I would like to see the continuation of EIA studies, especially on large projects and/or projects in environmentally sensitive areas.
- Water conservation by protecting watersheds and improving waste water treatment methods.
- I believe we should pay the price of handling our wastes in a way that does not affect others downstream.
- Promote conservation and protection of our wilderness areas. This is so important to ensuring a healthy, wildlife population, genetic diversity, and a safeguarding of every Canadian's heritage. Wilderness has great value in being left alone, not just in exploiting it for short-term economic gain.

# Improving Our Environment For Future Generations

***Albertans are committed to the improvement of our environment wherever possible to enhance the quality of life today and for future generations.***

## The Alberta Government:

1. is committed to take improvement action where no responsible party can be found.
2. will encourage and undertake programs to enhance the environment and our quality of life.
3. develops programs and standards to encourage local authorities to maintain effective infrastructure in order to protect high quality environmental health.

## What You Said - Overview

It is not surprising after all the previous comments that this principle proved extremely popular with Albertans. The volume of comments and their personal, emotional nature reveal the depth of concern for the environment. To the respondents, the quality of life in Alberta is more important than economic success. Many people feel they could accept lower economic standards to be able to live "a healthy life in a clean environment." There is general agreement that environmental issues must take precedence over any other issue. If we destroy the environment, "we have nothing; we can no longer exist!" The quality of the environment we leave for future generations is a large concern to Albertans. Many responses express a great desire to restore Alberta to its "pristine state" to allow future generations to enjoy a clean, unspoiled environment. Only then, says this generation, can future generations live healthy, high-quality lives. Albertans are committed to working toward this goal. People support government initiatives to protect and enhance the quality of our environment. Respondents acknowledge that the quality of our water, air,

land and food relates to the health of us all. They would like to take steps toward improving the quality of ground and surface water, reducing pollution from pesticides and herbicides, cleaning up river systems and lakes, preserving agricultural land, reducing air pollution, preventing toxic spills, reducing noise pollution, replanting trees, controlling municipal pollution, reducing $SO_2$ emissions by limiting car use, recycling, enhancing food quality, reducing waste, and developing better waste management practices. Albertans not only want the health of their environment secured by their government, but they urge all departments to improve and enhance this province for the future.

## Your Comments

- Only to say that you will be judged – by your children and grandchildren – by what you actually do, by the results of your governing, by what you leave for them. Just put all these nice sounding environmental principles into practice.
- Any and all environmental issues should take precedence over any other issue! No question!
- I sincerely believe that environmental protection is the paramount concern which needs to be addressed, if we are to leave a heritage for future generations.

*I sincerely believe that environmental protection is the paramount concern which needs to be addressed, if we are to leave a heritage for future generations.*

- Time is running out and I hate the thoughts of what we maybe leaving for our children.
- It is my strong belief that future generations have an equal right or privilege of living in an environment free from pollution and productive in renewable resources.
- Government may have to bear the costs of environmental clean-up of some errors of time past.
- My vision of Alberta is to see us get off the growth and development kick and promote stability and quality of life in the countryside.
- Cut the short-term job creation and focus on long-term sustainable quality of life.
- For myself, I want my child to grow up in a clean atmosphere where she wouldn't be scared to drink water from a creek, or to play outside without having smog and pollution enter her body with every breath.
- I have a vision of a happier healthier way of life for our native people.

*Cut the short-term job creation and focus on long-term sustainable quality of life.*

- That recycling becomes not just an urban concern, but a rural one as well. Too often programs are supported far more in the city because of the larger population base, and the rural areas are ignored.
- Don't count on "standards" to be the yardstick of environmental health; instead, use a wholistic approach to the ecosystem. It is a system, not a box of unrelated parts.

## Programs and Initiatives You Suggested

- We must get a clean substitute for gasoline to power our cars (hydrogen?) and do it soon – get rid of carbon monoxide fumes; solve the problem of the hole in the ozone layer.
- Alberta could see that leaded gas is priced higher than non-leaded gas.
- The immediate abolition of grazing in the forestry areas particularly by such beautiful creeks as Dutch, Racehorse, and the northwest branch of the Oldman.
- More revenue must be invested in reforestation. Smaller areas for tree cutting and logging would help to prevent the soil and nutrients from being washed down into rivers and lakes and lost forever.
- What about creating poplar farms – a fast growing tree that has a variety of uses – can be renewed quite quickly.
- Encourage green belts and shelter belts, especially in the south.
- First priority: No further agricultural expansion.
- More initiatives are needed for farmers to conserve wetlands.
- Upgrade old areas of city, rather than urban sprawl.
- Keep out anything that destroys natural beauty of the environment such as strip mining.
- Move towards chemical-free farming by 1995.
- Return marginal lands to their original state (or even better) for natural wildlife habitat.
- Farming – wind breaks, snow fences, etc. should be enforced to prevent erosion.
- We must ensure the safety and preservation of the endangered species of Alberta – for example the Woodland Caribou.
- Stop the invasion of woodlands, wetlands and fields by money-hungry developers.
- Double the number of provincial parks and conservation areas.
- I still encourage controlled hunting; hunters are our best conservationists.
- Complete the Ecological Reserve Program, not terminate it.
- Stop stores selling toxic products.
- Household chemicals which interfere with the natural degrading process of bacteria in the disposal system would be replaced by more natural cleaners such as vinegar, soda, borax, elbow grease.
- Utilize environmentally friendly cleaning products in all departments.
- No toxins should go into our rivers, creeks, lakes, ponds, etc.. No barns or corrals should be close enough to allow drainage to get into any of the above.
- Consider a "green tax" to help pay for environmental programs.

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